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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 001763

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ETRD](#) [PBTS](#) [PINR](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: QURESHI'S INDIA TOUR: INDIA EXPECTING GOODWILL TO
ABOUND

REF: A. NEW DELHI 1674
[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 1644

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires John Davison for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi will visit New Delhi, Jaipur, Ajmer, Chandigarh and Amritsar and will meet PM Singh, L.K. Advani, Jaswant Singh, PM Vajpayee, and a few state governors during his June 27-29 visit to India. The fifth round of the Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue (CD) will commence in New Delhi in July 2008. The Pakistan Political Counselor told PolOff that the CD so far had failed to address serious political issues, and that the Indian government should not wait for Pakistan to change politically before making progress on Indo-Pak issues. Former Indian Ambassador to Pakistan G. Parthasarthy predicted similarly that the visit would garner "nice atmospherics" and more confidence building measures, but not much more in terms of agreements or real progress. He added that violence in Jammu and Kashmir was on the rise and would remain so in the lead-up to state assembly elections in October 2008. MEA Additional Secretary Vivek Katju met his counterpart in Islamabad June 24 for the third meeting of the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism, during which both sides shared fresh information on terrorist incidents, according to the MEA. END SUMMARY.

Bilateral Issues and Travel to Indian States on the Agenda

[1](#)2. (C) According to the MEA, Pakistani Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi will be in India June 27-29 and will travel to Jaipur, Ajmer, Chandigarh and Amritsar as well as hold talks in New Delhi. MEA Deputy Secretary (Pakistan) [1](#)G. Balasubramanian told PolOff June 24 that Qureshi would meet the Prime Minister, opposition leaders L.K. Advani and Jaswant Singh, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the governors of Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana, as well as Foreign Minister (FM) Mukherjee. The visit will be a routine visit following FM Mukherjee's May visit to Pakistan, and Qureshi would discuss a full range of bilateral issues with Indian officials, Balasubramanian stated. Pakistani Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir is planning to come to New Delhi around July 20-21 to commence the fifth round of the Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue (CD), indicated Balasubramanian.

Pakistan High Commission: "There Is No Reason for India to Wait for Pakistan to Change Politically"

13. (C) Pakistani High Commission Political Counselor S. Zulfiqar Gardezi told PolOff June 25 that he expected Qureshi to raise political issues such as peace, security, confidence building measures (CBMs) and Kashmir, though neither side would present a specific list of agenda items. Gardezi maintained that not much progress had been made on "serious political issues," but only on softball issues such as people-to-people ties and trade, and limited progress had been made even on those. "There is a huge imbalance in terms of trade between the two sides," Gardezi noted, adding that India exported to Pakistan more than twice the amount of Pakistani exports to India. On political issues, Gardezi opined that the Government of Pakistan (GOP) had addressed Indian concerns regarding the Siachen glacier, but the Indians had yet to sign an agreement. On the Sir Creek dispute, though the two sides had made progress vis-a-vis a joint survey, India and Pakistan had still not come to an agreement on the matter. Asked if he thought the Government of India (GOI) was waiting for the GOP to stabilize before moving forward on matters of political importance, Gardezi emphasized that a change of Pakistani government should not be an issue, averring that the various leaders of Pakistan, both past and present, have similar views on the GOP's relationship with the Indian government. "There is no reason for India to wait for Pakistan to change politically," he emphasized. Referring to the recent terrorist attacks in

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Jaipur, and Indian suspicions of Pakistani involvement, Zardezi asserted that "acts of violence should not stand in the way of progress" on the Indo-Pak relationship, noting that the Pakistani PM had immediately called PM Singh to offer condolences when the incident took place.

Parthasarthy: Nice Atmospherics and More CBMs

14. (C) In a June 24 meeting, former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Gopalaswamy Parthasarthy predicted that Qureshi's visit would be full of "nice atmospherics and more CBMs," including a nostalgic meeting with former PM Vajpayee, a favorite of the Pakistanis who started the Indo-Pak CD when he was prime minister, and a symbolic visit to the Sufi shrine in the city of Ajmer, which was bombed by terrorists in 2007. Having been an advisor to the Indian FM in 2004, Parthasarthy bemoaned, that "the framework we have been working on is in tatters," relaying that he had advised the GOI to "stand firm on certain issues." In addition to increasing CBMs, opening the line-of-control and expanded Indo-Pak railway access would be good agenda items, Parthasarthy suggested, adding that he was critical of the rigidity and bureaucracy of the GOI which he blamed in part for impeding progress on such issues. Asked whether the PM would or should visit Pakistan before his term ended, Parthasarthy said that he did not think it would be a good idea, but acknowledged that the PM was "very sentimental" about his childhood village in Chakwal, Pakistan and would like to visit it as PM.

Violence to Increase in J&K

15. (C) Turning to the current situation on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Parthasarthy warned that Pakistani insurgency was on the rise while Kashmiri militancy was declining. Violence would increase closer to assembly elections in J&K in October 2008, predicting that the election would be violent (refs A,B). The GOI was well-equipped to "take care of the situation on the ground" in J&K Parthasarthy claimed, adding that his views on the situation were shared by the Indian Army and the Indian security establishment.

Information Sharing: the Third Meeting of Indo-Pak Joint
Anti-Terrorism Mechanism

¶6. (C) Prior to Qureshi's visit, MEA Additional Secretary (Political and International Organizations) Vivek Katju traveled to Islamabad June 24 for the third meeting of the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism, where he met his counterpart Additional Secretary Masood Khalid. According to a joint statement, both sides shared fresh information on terrorist incidents and agreed to continue to identify counterterrorism measures, and assist in investigations through the exchange of specific information. The Indian delegation also called upon Acting Foreign Secretary Khalid Aziz Babar, according to the MEA.

Qureshi's Visit a Symbol of Good Will

¶7. (C) Comment: We do not expect Qureshi to make substantial progress on front line issues during his trip to India, but his meeting with former PM Vajpayee should be well received on both sides. His symbolic trips to Amritsar and the Sufi shrine at Ajmer will also go a long way in spreading good will toward India. Though our Pakistani interlocutor was clearly frustrated by what he deemed a lack of progress on serious Indo-Pak issues, and our Indian interlocutor does not expect much movement to take place during Qureshi's visit, any dialogue between India and Pakistan is seen by Delhi as good dialogue, particularly at a time when the Pakistani government is in a state of transition and ahead of a delicately poised political and security environment in

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Jammu and Kashmir. End comment.
DAVISON